Meeting Note

File reference	**EN020001**
Status	**FINAL**
Author	**Janet Wilson and Mark Wilson**

Meeting with	**See attendance sheet**
Meeting date	**18th May 2010**
Attendees (IPC)	**See attendance sheet**
Attendees (non IPC)	**See attendance sheet**
Location	**Sedgemoor District Council Chamber, Bridgwater**

Meeting purpose	**Hinkley to Seabank proposed new transmission line: Community discussion about National Grid's Stage 1 Consultation.**

Summary of outcomes and advice given	Ian Gambles Director of Operations (IPC) welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Sedgemoor District Council for providing the venue and hosting the meeting. He outlined the proposal and explained the proceedings. His role as chair of proceedings is impartial in relation to the proposal as indeed are all other IPC staff in attendance. IG outlined what to expect from the meeting advising that it had been initiated because of concerns people had about the National Grid consultation. A range of organisations and individuals had been invited to participate and these included District and County Council representatives as well as those from Parish Councils. Members of Parliament were also in attendance. IG advised that there would be presentations from both the IPC and National Grid and then he would ask invited guests to put their questions. If others had questions then he would try to accommodate these later in the meeting if there was sufficient time. He invited anyone who had a question that could not be dealt with during proceedings to put it to staff from the IPC who would be available after the meeting to discuss issues and who would help where they could or take questions back to be addressed after the

	event. Journalists and press were in attendance but there would be no recording allowed during the proceedings. A note was being taken of the meeting and this would be available once it had been agreed. IG outlined his aim for constructive discussion which would stick to the agenda set out. He invited Mark Wilson (IPC) to outline the process and then National Grid to outline theirs. IG requested that people table questions rather than make speeches as it was important to understand that the meeting was about the consultation process only. Nothing said today to the IPC would influence the decision either way it was focused on ensuring that consultation was the main focus. Commissioners were not yet appointed to this scheme indeed cannot be appointed (legislatively) until the proposal is submitted to the IPC. The meeting was to focus on the consultation process and give all a better understanding of the different parties' views and points for National Grid to take into consideration in preparing their submission over the coming months. IG outlined that Mark Wilson as case leader was not a commissioner and would not be the decision maker. His role was to handle the management of the case from the beginning to the end and would be the main point of contact for all sides. --- Mark Wilson – Case Leader IPC MW outlined the process associated with an application and to give a flavour of what to expect. He would describe the IPC and, the role of commissioners and would outline the pre-application stage. In addition, he would outline the stages in the future if an application were to be accepted by the IPC for examination. The IPC was set up under the Planning Act 2008. It is independent of central government with 2 distinct elements the commissioners as decision makers and the secretariat who were the administrative, legal and planning professionals. Their role was to advise anyone engaged in the process and the paperwork associated with a DCO application. Their role was to organise and gather information on the application and then prepare it for examination by a commissioner(s). MW explained why the IPC had been set up. It was to make the decisions simpler, fairer and to improve the opportunities to take part. All with a stronger emphasis on involving people. It would make it fairer as applicants have

	a duty to consult at pre-application stage with a duty on the promoter to have regard to comments raised in consultation. Promoters/applicants have to respond pro-actively. The IPC is independent, impartial and inclusive The system is designed to be quicker. The wew process is intended to create more certainty for all and be less of a burden on the taxpayer in respect of costs associated with it. An important element is the National Policy Statements; these documents, defined in the Planning Act 2008, are essentially the government policy setting out the case for national need. They were produced by Government as the framework for decisions. The IPC was not involved in developing policy. The 2008 Act makes a clear distinction between policy making and decision making, separating out the latter from government. Commissioners will consider applications for major infrastructure projects against the framework of the NPS's. 6 NPS's have been published in draft. Two are relevant to the project: the overarching energy policy in EN1 and electricity networks policy in EN5. These documents were currently undergoing parliamentary scrutiny. It was stressed that they had not yet been published in their final form. Commissioners were appointed by the secretary of state. The Chair of the IPC (Sir Michael Pitt) allocates commissioner or commissioners to the project. Commissioners are from a wide variety of backgrounds and have been selected for their professional knowledge and judgement. They operate to a strict conflict of interests' policy to ensure that commissioners handling cases have no conflict with their decision making role. Commissioners work alone or as part of a team depending on the nature of the case. Sir Michael Pitt makes this decision at the point the application is formally submitted to the IPC. MW outlined the IPC involvement in the scheme under consideration at the meeting this evening. National Grid formally notified the IPC in October 2009. The first step in the consent order process. A number of meetings were then held. The IPC openness and transparency policy means that the notes of these meetings are published and available on our website. Meetings had been held with National Grid and with groups objecting to the proposals. Sir Michael Pitt contacted National Grid to seek assurance

	from them that they would deal proactively with the concerns being raised by the local communities about the consultation. The IPC secretariat handles all advice/queries about the process including those from statutory bodies. All advice given is recorded on our register. At the current time the information at the IPC is that an application for this project was expected in August 2011. (National Grid later confirmed that an application would not now be made until 2012) Consultation with communities must adhere to the statement of Community Consultation – National Grid set down their methodology of how they are going to consult and had then gone about consulting the community about route options. The IPC are keen to ensure that the application is being prepared with the involvement of the community and others. There was no statutory time period for the length of time the pre-application process should take and it was up to National Grid to take as long as they thought they needed. At this stage, the promoter (National Grid) is at the centre of the consultation process and the IPC has an encouragement and advisory role to all parties about the process. The commissioner appointed to examine a case would need to decide firstly whether the application can be accepted for examination and this would take into account the adequacy of the consultation undertaken. He or she would look at the consultation report which has to set out how promoters have had regard to the communities' views throughout the consultation process. The Local Authority would have a view on how adequate the consultation had been and the commissioner would consider this aspect. The Commissioner would also look at key evidence from within the Environmental Statement, looking to ensure that all Environmental Impacts had been included. The IPC has 28 days to decide whether to accept an application for examination. So what happens if it is accepted? Acceptance by the IPC does not mean that the proposal has been given the green light to proceed. All it means at this stage is that it may proceed to be examined by the Commission. The application is then advertised (by the promoter) and the advert will include instructions about how individuals can register to have their say to the IPC. The IPC want to make this as simple as possible for people and there will

	be a form to be used which makes sure individuals know the correct information required of them. This will be on our website. All persons who have made a valid representation will be invited to the preliminary meeting at which the Commissioner will discuss the arrangements for the examination and advise how the application will be examined. The timetable and dates for hearings together with the opportunities for detailed written representations to be made will be clarified at or after the preliminary meeting. The timetable will then be publicised. There will be opportunities for anyone who has the right to appear at the open floor hearing to be heard by the Commissioner. These hearings are public. At this point the dynamic changes; the Commissioner(s) now occupy the central role in the examination. Professional and administrative staff continue to provide support throughout this process. To summarise **Pre- application** is your opportunity to tell the developer what your views are. **Acceptance** – the IPC has 28 days to accept or reject the submission. The quality of the developers' consultation and whether it is in line with the SoCC will be considered. **Pre-Examination stage** – opportunities to formally register views and to become involved. **Examination stage** – this is principally by way of written representations but there will also be oral hearings. All who have registered can take part in the process. Over a period of no more than 6 months the examination is heard – this is a statutory timescale. **Decision Making stage** – the Secretary of State will make the decision if no National Policy Statement is published in its final form. At the moment none of the NPS's are in final form and therefore the IPC is in recommendation mode. Recommendations must be made within 3 months of the closure of the examination/hearings stage. We do not yet know what will emerge from the NPS process and thus there could be potential changes. Once NPSs are designated the IPC will be the decision makers and would do so within 3 months of the closure of the examination/hearings stage. **Beyond the decision stage** – (post decision) the decision

	itself is open to challenge. Either the IPC's decision or the Secretary of State's decision is capable of challenge in the courts in the 6 week period following the publication of the decision. Finally the IPC contact details were provided. A general enquiries email is available as well as an IPC telephone hotline is available on 0303 444 5000
	Ian Gambles invited National Grid to address the meeting
	National Grid – Peter Bryant Intend to address two main areas • The consultation to date • The optioneering which has been undertaken The invited guests to this meeting may have already seen the presentation at earlier sessions. PB stressed that National Grid were pleased to be here to give an opportunity to explain to people how National Grid were dealing with the issues raised and to outline the ongoing dialogue. The previous consultation concluded at the end of January and we have been analysing responses and undergoing a period of reflection. It was accepted that National Grid had missed something and they appreciated that they needed to give a lot more information to enable the general public to be able to understand all the information. All the information will be put into the public domain. On the issue of optioneering: Ken Murray from the National Grid's System Development Team addressed the room. System Development are responsible for ongoing development of the transmission system to deal with ongoing demand, primarily to continue to power the nation and ensure the lights stay on. He was a key author of the Strategic Options Report. He accepted that the document missed its mark – no-one could understand the detail and National Grid apologised for this. National Grid wanted to try to explain and do a better job to outline and explain why it had promoted an overhead line and why they had ruled out putting it in the sea. He wanted to explain why they had ruled out HVDC technology as this had not been obvious to the public.

	The energy sector was at the beginning of a new chapter of transformation. 2 key factors affected this: 1. demanding emissions targets 2. ageing generation fleet A large number of power stations would therefore be closing over the next few years and the generating companies were replacing these with new low carbon power stations, including nuclear and offshore windfarms which were often located in coastal and remote parts of the transmission network He showed a transmission systems map on the screen with OH lines in red and blue. This network had been constructed in the 1960s when the midlands and north were the focus of the UK's energy generation because of the proximity of the coalfields. There has been very little construction of new transmissions lines in the period since, although demand for electricity had increased substantially. A new challenge has evolved – the focus for energy generation is moving to the coast, whereas the network of national connections is in the spine of the country and this explained why the challenges faced in the West Country had emerged. A chart was displayed comparing generation with demand. By 2023 the expansion of generating capacity in the South West will increase net exports to 13,000 MW, compared to the current situation where it exports 1000 MW. To put this in context, the Midlands exports 8,000 MW to the South East, this demonstrates a changing pattern of generation location. The priority is to invest, if possible, in existing infrastructure and National Grid is committed to investing over £500m in the south west region. This investment was aimed at maximising the transmission capacity of the existing system. Even with this level of investment a new transmission circuit is still required in the south west 20 different ways of delivering this new circuit were considered as set out in the optioneering report. National Grid has been asked to explain in more detail why they had ruled out under sea HVDC. A chart was displayed showing Blue transmission lines (400KV) and red lines (275 KV) the black dots were substations. These were the points that local distribution

	companies take power to supply businesses and homes. The Plan identified Hinkley Point and Seabank. Melksham was also pointed out as a key corridor for power output for the region. The analysis of the Hinkley Point to Seabank HVDC option was presented as this was the option most queried. It mirrors the overhead line route and would highlight the issues common to each of the subsea options. A transmission diagram was shown to illustrate the critical bottleneck in the South West. The connection of Hinkley Point C was shown. The circuits which are being upgraded in the South West and a new substation is proposed at Aust were highlighted. It was noted that National Grid have to design the system so that power continues to flow even if parts of the system break down or are taken out of service for maintenance. They have to make sure power continues to flow safely and reliably, and that no damage is cause to equipment connected to the system. This is done by conducting a comprehensive suite of power system studies and scenario analysis that ensures the design of the transmission system is technically compliant with engineering standards. For the connection of Hinkley Point C, National Grid found that for a fault on the transmission circuits between Hinkley Point and Melksham that they encountered a serious problem called Transient Instability. This is bad for the power station and the power system, and can cause serious damage and potentially lead to power system shutdowns. This has to be engineered out of the system and this can be done using HVDC cables between Hinkley Point and Seabank which are capable of carrying 2000MW of capacity. The next power station to connect will be at Seabank Substation. In order to connect this power station in the scenario using HVDC cables National Grid have to upgrade the system around Seabank which includes building a short section of overhead line between Seabank and Tockington. When National Grid ran their studies and scenario analysis of the power system they found that the system remained stable under all breakdown conditions.

	However, for a breakdown between Seabank and Melksham, the direction of the power flow on the HVDC system had to change direction. This would have to happen very quickly, in less than 200 mili-seconds. This would be a very challenging application of HVDC technology, which is normally configured to behave a bit like an oil tanker – it's good at bulk transfer of power in one direction (normally between 2 countries) and not normally required to change direction extremely quickly in response to dynamic events on the transmission system. So this would be a very challenging application of HVDC technology and was one of the key issues arising from our analysis. The next generator to connect will be at Oldbury on Severn, another new nuclear power station. To accommodate this generator National Grid will be upgrading existing circuits and connecting into the Seabank to Melksham overhead lines. National Grid again ran their series of studies and analysis and found that for a breakdown on the circuits between Oldbury and Melksham that they encountered transient instability and overloads on the network. In order to resolve these, they had to increase the capacity of the HVDC cables to 4000MW. National Grid would therefore need 4 sets of HVDC cables which come in 1000MW blocks/modules and a have a converter station at each end. Each of the 4 Converters Stations would need to be about the same size as a large B & Q. This will require a facility about the same size as a retail park at each end of the line. The analysis was compared to that of the overhead line between Hinkley Point and Seabank. It was noted that an overhead line can carry 6000MW of electricity and when National Grid conducted their suite of studies and scenario analysis they found that there were no technical issues arising. The power flow of the line still had to change direction but this is straight forward on an AC overhead line and happens virtually at the speed of light. So, an overhead line facilitates the connection of the generation in the region and also provides 1/3rd more capacity than the HVDC cables. That means even more

	generation could be accommodated in the region without the need for more capacity. This would not be the case for the HVDC solution, as any further generation would trigger the need for more cable capacity. The costs of the HVDC cable were then compared with those of the overhead line. The breakdown of costs highlighted the £500m that National Grid is investing in the network and this is common across all of the options. The HVDC solution was shown to cost £1.2bn. It was explained that these HVDC costs are comprised of two elements, the undersea cables and converter stations. 8 converter stations, 4 at Hinkley Point and 4 at Seabank, are required and these cost approximately £800m. A number of other undersea cable options were considered but these were all shown to be more expensive. In contrast the costs of the overhead line were described. This comprised of the £500m of network investment and then £190m covering the cost of the overhead line and associated works. It was shown on a chart that the cost of the overhead line option was substantially less than the HVDC cable. National Grid's analysis led them to rule out the cable option in favour of the overhead line for 3 reasons: The undersea cable does not provide any extra capacity to facilitate further generation in the region The application of HVDC technology in this part of the network is very challenging as it needs the direction of power flow to reverse very quickly, and The cable was substantially more expensive than the overhead line. Hence, National Grid are promoting an on-shore transmission circuit which is the subject of its on-going route corridor consultation 37 written communications were sent by National Grid to groups and individuals at the outset of the consultation. There were 17 open events which involved 4000 people. This had produced 4000 pieces of communication which have raised a number of issues upon which National Grid have been reflecting. With regard to the Sub Sea option, there had been a lack

	of information in key areas and this is why National Grid is going over the ground again to help people engage with the process and understand the optioneering report. The next step – a newsletter answering the questions posed and issues raised – National Grid accept that they have made mistakes in the earlier consultation process e.g. sending out communications in plain envelopes had resulted in many being discarded as junk mail. New ones will be in marked envelopes so that people can readily identify the purpose of the communication. National Grid will be holding a further series of events going back to the same places so that people have an opportunity to absorb the information and then come back and ask questions. There will be more than one opportunity to consult. Information is being put together on a DVD which will be distributed widely to local authorities, libraries and parish councils. It will also be available at the drop in events and via the project website. There have been big changes to the website to make it more interactive and the presentations given will also be able to be accessed. The consultation that was programmed to close on 22nd January has effectively remained open and correspondence has continued to be received. The general public will receive extra information and a decision made on the preferred route later. The aim is to help people to understand the options and as such National Grid will keep the consultation open until the end of July, after which the consultation will be closed. This will mean that the earliest date that an application can be submitted will move to 2012 at the earliest. A key area going forward is for National Grid to engage with statutory stakeholders, local organisations and the local community via a series of community forums – National Grid accept that this was something that had been missing from the previous consultation. An independent facilitator has been engaged to lead and engage the public in these forums. --- Ian Gambles thanked the presenters and invited questions from the invited guests. --- **Question and Answer session**

	(Please note questions are in normal text and replies in italics) Q - from Ian Liddell Grainger MP. Advised that he was also representing Liam Fox. Liam Fox's letter had been presented to the IPC although he did not intend to read it out. Dr Fox's position was that the consultation was not adequate. He advised that the IPC needed to gather much more information. Mr Liddell Grainger explained that Hinkley Point was in his constituency and the discussion on transmission lines and transient instability raised some significant questions. For example, about a substation on Westonzoyland Road in Bridgwater and he wanted to know how proposed development would affect this and the 3 lines at Hinkley and the lines that go to Taunton. Would there be sufficient room for four switch gear buildings on the Hinkley Point site if the undersea option were pursued. Q Fiona Spence – Allerton PC She advised that National Grid had not offered any real alternative from the environmental point of view. The proposed routes have similar impacts and there is frustration over the absence of costings, particularly information on lifetime costings and carbon footprint. People did not expect this information to be missing. She didn't think that the costings stacked up. Figures for the undersea route had been inflated and were unrealistic. A 400kv line from Norway to the Netherlands in 2008 was completed for 550 million Euros. The public wanted independent analysis of the undersea route. Q3 Hugh Pratt - Wraxall Question to the IPC on consultation: Mr Pratt thought that National Grid should have taken a longer time and sought a longer consultation or a second opinion to inform their decision. Mr Pratt has expertise in high voltage lines and knows that there are high voltage experts outside the UK who should be asked for independent advice. It may also be that we are asking the wrong questions – why are we exporting 11GW from the west coast to the east coast? It would save problems and power loss if power wasn't moved about in over such a long distance. Should we not consult more as guardians of future generations? We have inherited bad decisions and the situation needs to be considered afresh. *Response from National Grid to question 1* *Neil Carter – four converter stations would be needed, each of the same size as a large DIY store. The Western Zoyland Road substation will remain the same and there*

	should be no visible change to the Bridgwater substation. *Response from Ken Murray on Carbon Footprint* *Apologised for the lack of information and explained that National Grid was still developing their processes on carbon. Copies of an independent study by Edinburgh University would however be available. Much of NG's equipment comes from overseas and so carbon emissions arise from transport as well as construction, commissioning, testing, operations and decommissioning.* *97% of carbon emissions happen in the operational phase especially through wastage and losses. Whether AC or DC there is always a fraction which is lost. In each under sea link at ¾ load (equates to 750 MW) each link loses 2%, which equates to 15 MW lost. With 4 lines in total this therefore equates to a loss of 60MW. The comparisons with overhead lines e.g. 60KM line at half load 1500MW losses are 0.5 to 1% losses. This equates to loss of 15 MW each on two lines thus 30MW losses. Conclusion is that there is a much higher rate of loss for HVDC than for OH lines.* *NG is willing to make available their Offshore development statement which publishes the whole life costs and explains how National Grid interpret policy. This report and the one on under grounding will be made available to all Parish Councils.* *National Grid response to lifetime costs* *National Grid explained that in electricity transmission projects, capital costs were large compared with operational costs and hence tended to be the determining factor. The regulator Ofgem reviewed all their costings and there would be stiff penalties if their calculations were incorrect. By contrast, operational costs for under sea cables were much higher than for overground. Hence there is nothing in the lifetime costs which would cause a change of mind at the moment.* *National Grid has carried out a revision /addendum to the optioneering report and will be revisiting the costs again in the light of the responses received. Edinburgh university evidence will also be made available* *Response by Ian Gambles for IPC* *Mr Gambles emphasised that it was important to distinguish between consultation, which took place at the pre-application stage, and the examination of an application after it had been accepted by the IPC. The IPC*

	are not responsible for the developer's consultation, and do not have the power to direct how it is carried out. Consultation is a matter for the developer within the context of the statutory requirements. Guidance from the Department of Communities and Local Government, available on the IPC website, advises promoters and they are required to have regard to that guidance. *IPC Commissioners will determine whether or not to accept an application for examination, and at that stage will consider whether National Grid's consultation has been adequate. Mr Gambles reassured the questioner that Commissioners would consider all the evidence presented to them in examining complex technical matters. If the Commissioners considered it necessary to seek independent expert advice, they had the power to appoint expert assessors.* *Whether energy flows from the west to the east is a point of substance but not one for now. People are entitled to make these comments in the course of the examination but it will be down to the Commissioner to consider the weight of any evidence. Comments of this nature can also be directed to the Government.* Q Tessa Munt MP for Wells Advised that we are exactly where we were some months ago. National Grid needs to go back to their information. Consultation is different to presentation. She pointed out that at the previous consultation, at the Webbington Hotel, we were informed that the last major consultation by National Grid had generated 270 responses. This consultation has generated 4097. People need to know the details and then comment rationally. Consultation involves real choice. In examining the Costs/Risks/Benefits, people want to see the costs for Overhead vs. under grounding v M5 route and the undersea option. At no point has there been clarity over any health risks in fact there has been absolute silence on this matter TM also questioned why we don't go for local energy generation which would mean that energy would not need to be exported in this way. The research and development budget of National Grid is £6.1 million pa which is very small for such a large organisation. As a monopoly she would like to know what legislation governs the options. People need to know what the costs in monthly terms would be to all households

	over a 50 year period, if the extra costs of undergrounding were spread over all customers. Q. Speaker stated that the reason why people didn't understand National Grid's reasoning was not because they were lacking in intelligence but because there is not enough information. If there was insufficient information, how could the National Grid have made any judgement on options at all? The speaker commented that National Grid was presenting misleading information. The cost differential between undersea and overground options was not 11 to 1, but 3 to 1, according to National Grid's own figures. Q Peter Crook - Friends of the Earth Can the Commission confirm the requirement for their information to be regulated by the Environmental Information Act 2004? Also, are National Grid covered by Schedule 9 of the 1989 Electricity Act – the licence holder has to have regard to preserving the natural beauty and to mitigate the effects for the benefit of the nation. The speaker advised that he thought that the proposal would be in breach of schedule 9 because it would be a blot on the landscape and fail to comply with the principles of sustainable development. Future generations would not thank us for agreeing to allow this vandalism of the countryside. The costs that National Grid has stated publicly are less than 1% of the bill nationally; so rather than North Somerset suffering the environmental costs, regulation should deal with the environmental concerns. DEFRA guidance notes and environmental information regulations apply to National Grid so he suggested that the information referred to by Tessa Munt MP be formally requested under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. Q – Speaker not named This is a welcome change to have a discussion but there has not been enough time to ask questions. With the number of people here this leaves only 40 seconds for each person to ask a question. Q Peter Gregory Mark Parish Council A statement was handed to National Grid and to the IPC about consultation. Does National Grid recognise that it failed to meet the communities' expectations and will it acknowledge this? Will National Grid confirm that they will set out all options that are feasible, affordable and safe?

	Unless National Grid can commit to this, my Parish Council will be implacably opposed to the scheme. *David Mercer National Grid* *The whole exercise geared at receiving feedback National Grid accept that they have not provided the information needed to provide and when more information is requested they have provide information. National Grid would accept that not enough information had been provided and they have now done so. As to the question of will we engage in consultation we can confirm that we will. We believe we have done so and if more information is needed then the community and others should tell us and we will provide it. If we need further information we will seek to obtain it.* *National Grid is governed by the Electricity Act. This states that the provision of the transmission network has to be Economic, efficient and co-ordinated. We are in a monopoly position and because of this we are regulated in all that we do. Equipment is built and operating costs are low compared to capital costs. Capital costs are the overwhelming factor.* *Re schedule 9 – we have published policy which deals with how we treat and value amenity and this has been tested through the planning process. In terms of the Schedule 9 process, our policy is published on our website for all to see and follow. National Grid is required by law to provide connections and transmission lines for energy generators. We are responding to a request for a grid connection.* *This proposal is EIA development and National Grid will be submitting a full Environmental Statement which will be a key point of the submission.* *We consider that consultation is a two way dialogue which requires us to establish an appropriate balance between environmental/engineering/economic issues on a case by case basis before making decisions.* Q Paul Hipwell (No Moor Pylons) To the IPC - National Grid have spent 24 minutes covering their optioneering and only 2 minutes on consultation. In November Liam Fox asked a question in public and no answer has been forthcoming from National Grid. The question which was raised in the House of Commons has still to have a clear answer. 10 questions were tabled and

	are still unanswered. The community were asked for views and 4000 responses were received. National Grid listens, yet has given no feedback. Can the IPC confirm whether Sir Michael Pitt has had the reassurances he sought from National Grid? When are the communities going to get an answer to their questions? In particular, the costs and how every person is affected. Q Chris Ambrose – Parish Council With regard to consultation, there is no real consultation but we are being given no guidance on national policy now that we have the NPS. The SoCC requires information to be proper and meaningful but consultations have been premature. Consultation extends beyond the immediate area and as such communities such as Nailsea should have a voice. National Grid doesn't have a good reputation for consultation as we have consistently been ignored. The previous government lost its office as a result. The optioneering process is unreliable and has been the subject of manipulation. It has therefore produced the answer that National grid wanted get. It is a serious matter and the implications for the communities will last for another 50 years. Must there be a defined route at the acceptance stage or will the options still be open? Q Mr Featherly – Compton Bishop PC The route goes through the Webbington /Loxton Gap of the Mendip Hills. The Environmental Impact Assessment gives no thought to consultation about this aspect which should be dealt with at an early stage. Q Mike Cox – Yatton PC We have heard a lot about consultation and it being fair and open and honest. Important decisions are being made by National Grid that will impact upon future generations. We welcome the wish to consult but when will we know the cost over the next 50 years? What plans have you got if the overwhelming public view is not to have the overhead cables? *Ian Gambles IPC* *An application for development consent for a Nationally*

	Significant Infrastructure Proposal must be for a defined proposal. National Grid must apply for one route. Insofar as he could comment on whether Sir Michael Pitt was reassured regarding National Grid's response to community concerns about its consultation on this proposal, Mr Gambles explained that he considered the consultation to be an ongoing process. Concerns had been expressed, and it was a matter for National Grid to consider how to take forward its consultation on the different options in a way which responded appropriately to the concerns. *It was clear from comments made tonight that many concerns still existed, and therefore it would be wrong to say that we are yet reassured. Equally, it would be wrong to say that a consultation process can only be deemed adequate when no-one has any further concerns. National Grid had announced tonight that they would not be applying until 2012, and they would need to listen to the comments which had been made to them about the consultation.* *National Grid* *Picking up points about Environmental Impact and under grounding, at the initial stage a high level environmental study has been undertaken in accordance with national Grid's schedule 9 statement which considered areas of constraint , such as urban areas and sites of national and international importance. It looked at areas to avoid and areas to minimise the impact. National Grid has been looking for white land not impacted on by special designation. In the search some areas had large number of constraints and some had very few.* *National Grid has identified 2 overhead line corridors and will be undertaking a detailed EIA on the preferred corridor. National Grid will consult on the scope of the EIA and will establish a number of thematic groups to look at cultural heritage, landscape and visual assessment and ecology.* *Under grounding was considered in the high level study through a review of National Grid's guidance. National Grid's undergrounding policy states that it will give consideration to undergrounding in areas of exceptional constraint such as urban concentrations, rural issues and river and estuary crossings, we will also give consideration to under grounding. We are demonstrating we have been listening and responding. We have extended consultation and discussed issues with the local authorities. National Grid will seek to answer questions further through*

	presentations, as we go forward with the consultation. Q Brian Matthews – Lib Dem Candidate We have heard about transparency but haven't had it up to now. A week ago I offered to provide information to National Grid on American super conductors but no reply has been forthcoming. I provided my business card for National Grid representatives but no-one has come back to me Q unnamed speaker Are we to understand that additional information will be available in June to July but that your closing date remains 23 July? This is not enough time to deal with the issues? The Loxton Gap and cable issues in the AONB mean that the cables have to go underground. In addition, there have been no options for costings. Doubt is cast on the validity of the exercises. Remote areas are very valuable. National Grid can not use cost as a reason to destroy these areas. Q unnamed speaker Will National Grid open up the consultation cover all of the options? Q Fiona Erleigh (ESOV West) I agree with the comments, especially those relating to the urban area of Nailsea and Wraxall where 30,000 residents are affected and have been involved. Costs matter to us, as does visual amenity but how will health concerns be addressed – we simply don't know. Also the affect on housing costs is also unknown. This is a very frustrating process, which doesn't allow for local authority costs to be taking into account. The proposal should avoid Nailsea urban area altogether. Overhead lines are impractical over short distances. Will National Grid consider under grounding? Q Doug Bamsey, Sedgemoor DC IPC looks at Government guidance in EN5. A good many councils believe that EN5 is inadequate as it restates the Holford Rules of the 1960s. I am going to see DECC to reinforce the message that the Government needs better and more thorough guidance on these issues of policy and principle rather than the issues of detail.

	Q John le Band Regarding transient instability – is nuclear power more susceptible to transient instability? How many decisions has the IPC made to grant or refuse development consent? *Ian Gambles IPC – the IPC has only been in existence for a short time and no decisions have yet been made.* *National Grid on transient instability:* *Location on the system is the key to where transient instability occurs, rather than the design of the power station.* *National Grid on visual amenity:* *Currently, with regard to visual amenity, National Grid has not given full consideration to direct effects. In order to do this in a way that is accurate and not misleading a decision needs to be taken on where the line and pylons are going to go. What has been done to date is a review and assessment of published national and local landscape character assessments which have assisted in the identification of a least environmentally constrained corridor. National Grid will be looking at minimising impact through the careful siting of an overhead line; we will be looking at the detail and wherever possible looking to minimise the impact using the topography of the land and existing trees and vegetation* Q – National Grid does not seem to understand that this proposal is on the levels where it is very flat and topography will not mitigate the visual impact. *National Grid is aware of the very flat and open landscape of the Somerset Levels and Moors and this has been given consideration as part of the high level route corridor study. In accordance with the Holford Rules, National Grid will seek to use natural topography and tree and hill backgrounds wherever possible to minimise the visual impact of its proposals. However in some places this may not be possible. As part of the next stage of this project detailed assessments would be undertaken to determine the route of the overhead line and environmental impacts of the proposals.* *Ian Gambles -* *Visual amenity, Health issues will be material considerations for the commissioner to deliberate on*

	during the examination. *National Grid – With regard to costs on electricity bills - National Grid will do provide this information. Business processes are guided by the Electricity Act which requires proposals to be economic, efficient and co-ordinated. We have a duty to get the best we can at the least cost.* *Environmental issues were taken account of in the Route Corridor Study. This is a major transformation of the energy sector. Power flows cost large amount and Ofgem are concerned about the costs involved to provide the necessary transmission infrastructure to meet future needs.* *Project Discovery will consult on the current framework. National Grid does not decide where generators locate. Ofgem are asking if the framework is right. National Grid is fined if they breach a licence at a rate of 10% of global turnover and there are repercussions. Investments and the costs associated with upgrading the system, have to be set against price controls. At their last price control National Grid were given £2.97 million to invest. Transmission costs that will be incurred will increase over the next few years. National Grid will answer questions on costs associated with transmission infrastructure. Questions on the structure of the transmission and energy generation market should go to Ofgem.* *Ian Gambles* *National Grid need to consider if they are prepared to open consultation to other options.* *National Grid* *We believe that by providing information about costs and technical issues then we are engaging fully with all parties. If people don't understand any information then they can ask questions and so the answer is yes.* Q unnamed speaker Will options put to the IPC be for option 1 or 2? *National Grid – it would be disingenuous to say otherwise – we believe that the options presented in stage 1 are the best solution in terms of cost and technical requirements.* Q unnamed speaker Does that mean options 1 or 2? *National Grid – there will be a preferred option that will form the basis of the stage 2 consultation.*

	Q – Tessa Munt MP The information that National Grid will provide should be circulated to all, including all details and all options and costs. We should have sufficient time to comment on this information before the stage 2 consultation closes on 23rd July 2010. Q unnamed speaker Do National Grid believe that the option to be submitted to the IPC will be option 1 or 2, or something else *National Grid – at this point we don't know. We will have two years of information by then on which to inform the decision as to which option is to be pursued.* Q - Unnamed speaker We are not being given straight answers – Do you believe that there are only two options on the table and in 2 years time you will choose one of them *National Grid – We have outlined what is our preferred connection method for the route corridors we have identified; however based on current information, if something comes out of this consultation process, which requires more consideration, then National Grid will consider responses that have been received and will take a view at the time the application is prepared.* *Ian Gambles – In closing the meeting IPC will expect National Grid to reflect on what has been said and to decide how it impacts on their position. IPC are available to talk to anyone and for them to seek advice at any time.* *Ian Gambles thanked everyone for their contribution and the manner in which the meeting had been conducted.* Q – Unnamed speaker The evaluation of the visual amenity study is key. Visual amenity has a value. The speaker quoted from a Social Costs Benefit appraisal on the issue of visual amenity. This issue should have no less status in rural areas than in urban environments. Funding is available to improve streets, however, pylons were a gross littering of the countryside. Meeting closed at 8.20

Circulation List	Ian Gambles
	Mark Wilson
	Nicholas Brown (BDB)

	Janet Wilson

ATTENDANCE SHEET

	Name	Organisation
1	Doug Bamsey	Sedgemoor District Council
2	Elfan Ap Rees	North Somerset Council
3	Graham Quick	North Somerset Council
4	Andrew Goodchild	West Somerset District Council
5	Paul Hipwell	No Moor Pylons
6	Dr Maggie Gregory	Pylon Moor Pressure
7	Brian Wilkins	No Pylons Loxton
8	Keith Edwards	Save our Valley
9	Fiona Erleigh	Save Our Valley West
10	Dr Peter Gregory	Mark Parish Council
11	Edward Farely	Compton Bishop Parish Council
12	Chris Ambrose	Wraxall & Failand Parish Council
13	Cllr Pratt	Wraxall & Failand Parish Council
14	Roger Lavers	Woolavington Parish Council
15	Mrs C. Morris	Badgworth Parish Council
16	Dr Margaret Rutherford	Loxton Parish Council
17	Richard Parker	Winscome and Sandford
18	Mr Malcolm Nicholson	Weston Super Mare
19	Cllr Mike Cox	Yatton Parish Council
20	Cllr Geof Delmege	Nailsea Town Council
21	Cllr R Taylor	Backwell Parish Council
22	Mr Gordon Irvine (replaces Diane Chislett)	Clapton in Gordano parish Council
23	Cllr Summerfield (replaces Cllr J Meek)	Portbury Parish Council
24	Ms Julie Smart	Easton-in-Gordano Parish Council
25	Cllr Elizabeth Shayler	Banwell Parish Council
26	Peter Crook (instead of Helen Pillinger)	Friends of the Earth
27	Fiona Spence	Allerton Environmental Group

28	Steve Mewes	Wedmore Green Group
29	Ian Liddell-Grainger (Bridgwater & Somerset West)	MP
30	Bob Garner	Clevedon Town Council
31	Peter Bryant	National Grid
32	Richard Walsh	National Grid
33	Catherine McCloskey	National Grid
34	David Mercer	National Grid
35	Ken Murray	National Grid
36	Neil Carter	National Grid
37	Chris Chadwick	The Environment Partnership (NG)
38	Nicholas Brown	Bircham Dyson Bell (NG)
39	Alyn Jones	Somerset County Council
40	Brian Matthew	Liberal Democrats
41	Cllr Andrew Gilling	Sedgemoor DC
42	Gerald Prince	Chapel Allerton Parish Council
	Tentative	
43	Dr Liam Fox (Somerset North)	MP
44	Charlotte Leslie (Bristol NW)	MP
45	Tessa Munt (Wells)	MP
46	Jonathan Richards	Mendip AONB